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Governor apologizes to ASG workers for reduction in hours

Togiola: "There was no other option available"

Governor Togiola Tulafono says it has been three weeks since revenue measures aimed at addressing the current financial shortfall were submitted to the Fono and to date, there has still been no action taken by the Legislature. That is why he says there was no other option available to him but to impose a reduction in hours for government employees whose salaries are funded locally.

Togiola apologized to those affected, saying members of his senior staff have gone through all available options to prevent this drastic move but none was available. The cuts affect the Governor, Lt. Governor and all cabinet members.

The reduction will be reflected in the second payroll for this month, and will not affect next week's paychecks. Reduction in hours only applies to those under the executive branch, and does not apply to the judicial or the

legislative branches as the Governor has no authority over the approved budgets of these two branches government.

Togiola said he will leave the final decision up to the leaders of the judiciary and the legislature, if they want to take the same action. He has already met with Fono leaders about the reduction and requested the Fono's support but the final decision is up to them.

The reduction went into effect on Sunday, Feb. 6.

It is based on a persons earnings, meaning those with the lowest salaries get a smaller cut in hours compared to those with higher salaries.

Employees earning below \$10,400 up to \$20,800 will have their work hours reduced by four hours. Those who are paid between \$20,800 and \$49,999 will face a 6-hour cut, while those earning between \$50,000 and \$62,400 will have an 8-hour reduction.

Those who make more

than \$62,400 would face 12-hour cuts per pay period. A total of 2,583 employees will be affected, and the reduction will save \$3.2 million a year.

Togiola said employees who are exempted from the cuts are grant funded employees, two-year contract specialists, the grant portion of grant and locally funded positions, and school level employees of the Department of Education. The exempted DOE employees are those who are physically located at the schools sites, inclusive of bus drivers, on-site school lunch staff who are paid with local funds, and locally paid bathroom monitors.

Each director must schedule staff to ensure the continuation of services, and they are also responsible for seeing that the reduction in hours is carried out as smoothly as possible.

*The more man meditates upon good thoughts,
the better will be his world and the world at large. Confucius*

Administration bill seeking to increase COLA for retirees gets approval from Senate

The Senate has unanimously approved the administration bill calling for the increase of the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) from the current 2% to 4% for government retirees.

But it is keeping the multiplier effect at 2% instead of increasing it to 4%.

Chairman of the Retirement Fund Board Aleki Sene Sr. testified before the Senate Committee on Retirement that imposing the proposed 4% multiplier will mean that people will receive more money in retirement benefits than they earned during their time of employment and this will wipe out the retirement fund money within 5

years. He said a 4% multiplier rate would have the effect of a person with 30 years of service retiring at a salary of \$40K and making \$48K a year on retirement.

Last June, said Sene, the Board of Trustees approved a 2% COLA increase but the Governor did not send it to the Fono for approval. Now the Governor has submitted a proposed 4% increase which would raise the unfunded liability of the fund to \$7.2 million. Sene said the government contribution would have to be increased from the current rate of 8% to 8.6%.

He said that with favorable investment returns, there would be no need to increase the government

contribution at this time. He said the board considered the current financial state of the government and perhaps sometime in the future, ASG's contribution can be adjusted. The COLA increase will not affect the current contributions employees have to pay in to the fund which is 3%

Togiola said the COLA increase shall be paid retroactively from Oct. 1, 2008 and it would increase monthly annuities for 91% of retirees. Sene said retirement checks for qualified retirees can be released on Feb. 15, if the Fono approves the bill and it is signed by the Governor.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To all alcoholic beverage licensees

Be advised that the Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with the Ta'ita'itama Prevent Underage Drinking Initiative and the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board *will be conducting compliance check activities in your area beginning December 2010 and continuing through December 2011.*

Please remember that selling alcoholic beverages to a person under 21 years old is illegal per American Samoa Code, Title 27, Chapter 05; Section 27.0531: *"No licensee may sell any alcoholic beverage to any person under 21."*

American Samoa is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of its people. Our priority issue is to combat and prevent underage drinking and the problems that arise from this illegal activity.

**For additional information, feel free to contact the
Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws - EUDL Program at 633-1582.**

ASG RADIO PROGRAM

With: Gov. Togiola Tulafono

On: KSBS FM 92.1 Saturdays @ 7:30 a.m.

Governor talks about ASSSC situation

-says programs offered are good for territory-

Governor Togiola Tulafono said during his weekend radio program that the American Samoa Special Services Commission wanted to put an end to its programs when the problems with the spending of funds came to light.

(The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Office of Inspector General released last month an audit report of ASSSC which cited many problems and questionable costs charged to grants it provides to ASSSC to administer AmeriCorps programs in the territory. Read to Me Samoa, Jungle Busters, and HIS Ministries were three of the four sub grantees of ASSSC cited in the report.).

According to the Governor, the director of the commission, as well as the staff came to see him when the problems surfaced, and

they revealed their intention to discontinue the programs. Togiola said he told them to go to Washington to discuss a solution with the federal grantor, and he urged them not to give up when there are problems but instead, find a way to continue offering their services.

Togiola said that although the media hadn't reported it, the commission members met with the grantor in Washington DC and there were requirements imposed on the commission including the collection of disallowable funds from the responsible parties (questionable costs).

The governor said ASG will help the commission so its programs and services are not interrupted. Since 2001, the commission has received more than \$7 million in federal funds to operate the Ameri-

Corps, Read to Me Samoa, and other programs in the territory. The OIG review focused on recent grants to the commission totaling more than \$4.8 million.

Togiola said his office is awaiting a copy of the report for review, and he wants to find out how his office can assist ASSSC, saying the programs administered by the group are very important and do a lot of good for the territory.

Togiola said that based on the information he received, the grantor does not want to end these programs but rather, wants the commission to take corrective action so they can comply with program regulations. He made it clear that ASSSC is an independent entity, but is working with the Governor's Office on issues that need to be addressed.



"American Samoa's International Federation of American Football (IFAF) 2011 World Team and Developmental Team players. American Samoa has six players on the World Team, Beck Coulter, David Katina Jr, Penitito Fa'alologo, Viavia Manuma, Lawrence Tuioti-Danielson & Justin Taimatuia and three players on the Developmental Team, Risati Mapu, Ben Langford and Alexander Willis. Coach Suaese "Pooch" Ta'ase and the local players were nominated and selected by IFAF. All players must be between 17-19 years of age. The 2011 World Team vs Team USA game is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2, 2011 in Austin, TX; this event also coincides with National Signing Day for football players across the nation.

SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES IN YOUR ASG NEWSLETTER "TAPUITEA"

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa. Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to:

Harry Stevens (harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov) or Jacinta Galea'i (jacinta@americansamoa.gov)

ACCJC/WASC Removes ASCC from “Warning” Status and Reaffirms Full Accreditation

By James Kneubuhl, ASCC Press Officer

After two years of diligent effort to satisfy the stated criteria of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a division of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) has received confirmation of its success. In a letter dated January 31st of this year from ACCJC President Dr. Barbara Beno, ASCC is listed among institutions now removed from the “Warning” category, and whose accreditation has been reaffirmed. “We expect to receive follow-up communications from ACCJC/-WASC pertaining to our individual institution and what steps they recommend we take to remain in good standing,” said ASCC Accreditation Liaison Officer Dr. Kathleen Kolhoff-Belle. “For the moment, our inclusion on the list of institutions removed from ‘Warning’ status and with reaffirmed accreditation means that all of our efforts over the last two years have given us the results we hoped for.”

In February 2009 the ACCJC/WASC Commission informed ASCC that it had been placed on probation pending the resolution of issues raised in ten recommendations by an October 2008 visiting team, as well as one additional recommendation by the Commission itself. During this probationary period, the College’s accreditation provisionally remained in full effect, while teams of ASCC administrators and faculty worked to address the ACCJC/WASC recommendations. ACCJC/WASC representatives made two follow-up visits in March and October 2010,

and on both occasions the visiting teams remarked that ASCC had made progress ahead of the previously established timetable for addressing the recommendations. At the conclusion of the November visit, representative Dr. Mark Zacovic told an ASCC audience that based on his team’s findings the College had “successfully completed addressing all recommendations”, although the official change in its status would come from the ACCJC/WASC Commission scheduled to meet in January.

Having received the good news from the Commission, the many ASCC administrators, administrative support staff, faculty, students and community members who dedicated themselves to addressing the ACCJC/WASC recommendations now share a feeling of celebratory satisfaction. “This bears testimony to what we can accomplish working together,” said ASCC President Dr. Seth Galea’i. “This process gave us an opportunity to clarify our focus as an institution, and to reaffirm the importance of adopting best practices based on data-driven standards as articulated by the Accrediting Commission. With our accreditation issues now resolved, we can return our attention to priority projects such as our four-year Teacher Education degree, which is now poised to move ahead at full speed.”

In addition to everyone at ASCC who worked for the better part of two years on the ACCJC/WASC recommendations, President Galea’i gave special recognition to Governor Togiola

Tulafono for his assistance during this period. “The Governor kept tabs on our progress and offered his help in any way he could,” said the President, “while at the same time giving us the latitude to make our own decisions.” President Galea’i also commended the Board of Higher Education and chairman Uta Dr. Laloulu Tagoilelagi for their leadership and support, and thanked the Fono leadership, specifically Legislator Lemapu Talo, chairman of the Education Committee, for attending all meetings between the Board and the visiting ACCJC/WASC teams.

Work to address the ACCJC/WASC recommendations progressed even while the College underwent a period of unprecedented change and growth. “Many recent developments took place at the same time,” President Galea’i reflected. “Our enrollment peaks over the past few semesters indicated a greater demand for what ASCC offers, so we expanded our curriculum to include our first night classes. Also, our Trades & Technology Division opened its Apprenticeship and Re-Train programs to assist workers displaced by the cannery closures. ARRA funding has enabled us to make plans for modern learning technology such as ‘smart classrooms’ and campus-wide Wi-Fi. We initiated a number of energy saving measures, such as our first solar panels for part of the campus. Even with the ACCJC/WASC challenge now behind us, we have many new developments to focus on, but I’m sure the insights we gained from the accreditation-related process will prove invaluable as we move ahead.”

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On February 8, 1944, Captain Allen Hobbs relieved Captain John Gould Moyer and took office as American Samoa's 30th naval governor (until January 27, 1945).

On February 9, 1863, the Missionary vessel *John Williams* and the Peruvian blackbirding vessel *Rosa Patricia* left Apia with the Peruvian vessel being seen making for the Tokelau Islands. The *Rosa Patricia* called at Olosenga where her supercargo Pitman signed on Eli Hutchinson Jennings as a recruiter. According to Tokelau tradition, Jennings was accompanied by a Fakaofu laborer on Olosenga who helped to persuade his fellow islanders to recruit.

On February 10, 1990, Tolia ("Tony") Solaita, Samoa's only Major League Baseball player, was shot to death in Tafuna, American Samoa.

On February 11, 1948, President Harry S. Truman declared his intention to designate the Department of the Interior as the agency responsible for the administration of American Samoa, Guam and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

On February 11, 1977, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Western Samoa at the beginning of her Silver Jubilee.

On February 12, 1813, James Dwight Dana was born in Utica, New York. Dana subsequently graduated from Yale College, taught there, and later became geologist and mineralogist of the United States Exploring Expedition, which visited the Samoan Islands in October, 1839. He authored 214 books and articles, including *the System of Mineralogy* (1837), *Manual of Geology* (1862), *Corals and Coral Islands* (1872) and *Characteristics of Volcanoes* (1890).

He was awarded the Copley Medal by the Royal Society in 1877 and the Wollaston Medal by the Geological Society of London in 1874. A crater on Mars and a Dorsum (wrinkle-ridge system) on the Moon are named in his honor. Note on the *Manual of Geology* by J. D. Dana: This standard university text on mineralogy has been continuously revised and updated (for many years under the title of *Dana's Manual of Geology*) and currently is available in its 22nd edition under the title of *Manual of Mineral Science* revised by Cornelis Klein. Many old school geologists continue to refer to the book reverently as *Dana*.

On February 12, 1974, the Courthouse of American Samoa was entered on the *National Register of Historic Places*.

On February 13, 1878, the United States-Samoa Treaty of Friendship, signed in Washington, D.C. by Le Mamea and representatives of the State Department, was ratified by the U.S. Senate.

On February 13, 1941, American Samoa's Governor, Captain Laurence Wild, replied to the Chief of Naval Operations' (Admiral Harold R. Stark's) directive of December 20, 1940 "by recommending the establishment of a Native Insular Force separate and distinct from the Fita Fita Guard, which was to function under and to be paid by the Government of American Samoa." This force subsequently came into being as the First Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

On February 14, 1941, "Rose Atoll was made a Naval Defense Area by Executive Order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt."

Governor offers condolences on passing of CPO Pat Tervola

Chief Procurement Officer Tauiliili Iupati "Pat" Tervola passed away peacefully at the LBJ Medical Center on Feb. 3

Governor Togiola Tulafono used his weekend radio program to offer his sincerest condolences to Tauiliili's wife Mrs. Tapai Tervola, son Pat, and Mrs. Ve'a Enesi who is the mother figure of the extended family.

Tauiliili was an educator for the local Department of Education for many years, even serving as vice principal and then principal of Samoana High School. He is famous for his musical skills and his friendly demeanor which will be missed by many who knew him.

Tauiliili was 58 years old.

Governor's chief legal counsel testifies before Fono on proposed excise tax hikes

The Governor's chief legal counsel Toetasi Tuiteleleapaga testified before the House Ways and Means Committee last week that the \$3 million the American Samoa Government estimates to collect from the proposed hikes on excise taxes for the importation of beer, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, tobacco and cigars will be deposited into the ASG general fund account.

Under current laws, a certain percentage or portion of excise taxes imposed on the aforementioned products are earmarked to fund specific operations of the government, while the rest goes into the general fund. For example, under the alcoholic beverage tax, 50% is to fund the Feleti Barstow Public Library, 25% goes to fund the Office of the Administrative Law Judge, 12.5% goes towards repaying the \$20 million ASG loan from the retirement fund, and the remaining funds are deposited into the general fund.

Tuiteleleapaga explained that under the proposal, the current percentages or specific cents cited in the law are adjusted down so the entire \$3 million estimated to be collected from the new proposed taxes will go directly into the general fund to help fund government operations.

He said the earmarks are permitted under current law, and the administration bill only adjusts the percentage portions.

Nu'uuli/Airport Road Project progressing

The road project aimed at improving the Airport Road starting from the main road intersection in Nu'uuli will be carried out in three phases due to the lack of adequate funding. Contractors for the first phase are already prepared to move forward with the project.

The already damaged road got a few more new potholes following the heavy rains brought on by Tropical Cyclone Wilma which blew through the territory last month.

Public Works deputy director Faleosina Voight told senators that the project is spread out in three separate phases, and the first phase which includes drainage improvement comes with a price tag of \$4.5 million. The second phase will see improvements to the intersection, with the final phase dealing with reconstruction - which will most likely be funded under the budget for FY 2012.

The project will include the area at the Office of Motor Vehicles.

American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency

January 14, 2011

PUBLIC NOTICE**Annual request for comments**

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) has developed the AS-EPA Nearshore Marine Water Quality Monitoring Plan that addresses the need to monitor for nonpoint source pollution in American Samoa. A main group of pollutants that cause water quality impairments in American Samoa are pathogen indicators, specifically *enterococcus* in coastal recreation waters. Two objectives of the AS-EPA Nearshore Marine Water Quality Monitoring Plan are to determine whether nearshore marine water quality meets the American Samoa Water Quality Standards (ASWQS) for enterococci, and to inform the public when coastal recreation waters do not meet ASWQS for enterococci, as well as the potential risks associated with the polluted waters.

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency has created a file that contains the AS-EPA Nearshore Marine Water Quality Monitoring Plan, a summary of historical bacteriological data of coastal recreation waters, the American Samoa Water Quality Standards, and the advisory format used to give notice to the public that the coastal recreation waters are not meeting or are not expected to meet applicable water quality standards for enterococci. **These documents are available to the public at the AS-EPA office in Utulei.**

AS-EPA invites public comments concerning the monitoring and public notification program regarding: (1) the beach evaluation and classification process, including a list of waters to be monitored and beach ranking; (2) the sampling design and monitoring plan, including sampling location and sampling frequency; and (3) the public notification and risk communication plan, including methods to notify the public of a beach advisory.

Comments must be submitted in writing within thirty (30) days of the published date of this notice. Submit comments to the AS-EPA office or by mail to AS-EPA Water Program, PO Box PPA, Pago Pago, AS 96799.

For more information, please contact Christianera Tuitele, Water Program Manager at 633-2304.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Are you interested in earning your MLS and becoming a librarian?

The University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Library and Information Sciences and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is beginning a new cohort in september 2011 in the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI). through this outstanding program, students can earn a master's degree by participating in a ten day institute to be held in august 2011 at the college of micronesia national campus in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. Yes!!! UNT will bring its ALA accredited master's degree program and popular online format to the pacific islands. Are you interested in learning about new information technologies -virtual reference, online storytelling, digital libraries, graphic novels, web site development, database management, metadata, or all about different types of libraries? Would you like to earn a certificate in youth programming, storytelling, management, health information, or digital content management?

LEAP Scholarship Program

UNT/DLIS is collaborating with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) to offer full tuition scholarships for pacific islanders living and working in the USAPI. The full tuition scholarships will serve to recruit and educate librarians to work in the USAPI and to increase the numbers of indigenous librarians among the region's professional library staffs. The scholarships are funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Citizenship or residency within the USAPI region for 10 years is required for eligibility for the UNT LEAP/DLIS scholarship. 23 students will receive a \$20,000 full scholarship covering tuition and fees. Each student will be matched with a UNT university libraries professional librarian for academic support and mentoring. Recipients will receive stipends to support travel and expenses, national and local professional association dues, a laptop computer and software, and funds to support home connectivity.

For more information about the master's degree program and the leap scholarship go to the leap website at: <http://www.lis.unt.edu/leap> or contact either:

Yvonne J. Chandler, Associate Professor
UNT/DLIS LEAP Scholarship Program
yvonne.chandler@unt.edu
(940) 565-3777 or 1-877-ASK-SLIS

Jane Barnwell, Director
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American Samoa Government
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AMERICAN SAMOA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (AS-EPA)



Plastic Shopping Bags BAN

Our Legislature passed a law prohibiting supplying of plastic bags to consumers and customers in American Samoa. The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency along with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Public Safety are designated and authorized to enforce the provisions of this law on its effective date.

Therefore, AS-EPA wants to inform the public that the plastic shopping bags ban will be effective February 23, 2011. This means supplying plastic shopping bags to consumers and customers will be prohibited beginning February 23, 2011.

For more information please visit our website: www.asepa.gov or call AS-EPA at 633-2304

YOU CAN HELP!

By reusing your existing plastic shopping bags or using alternative bags such as:



Paper Bags



Cloth Bags



Biodegradable Bags



Woven Baskets





AMERICAN SAMOA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (AS-EPA)

Plastic Shopping Bags Ban



Plastic Free, The Way To Be...

Did You Know!

- Plastic debris causes the death of 1,000,000 sea birds and 100,000 marine animals such as turtles, dolphins and whales every year when they mistake them for food.
- Plastic bags take about a thousand years to break down and as they break down, they release poisonous materials into the water and soil.
- Plastic bags litter our landscape, fill our streams and find their way to the ocean.
- When burned, plastic bags release toxic fumes that are harmful to people, animals, and the environment.

You Can Help!

By reusing your existing plastic shopping bags or using alternative bags such as:

For more information please visit our website: www.asepa.gov or call AS-EPA at 633.2304



Cloth Bags



Paper Bags



Biodegradable Bags



Woven Baskets

